

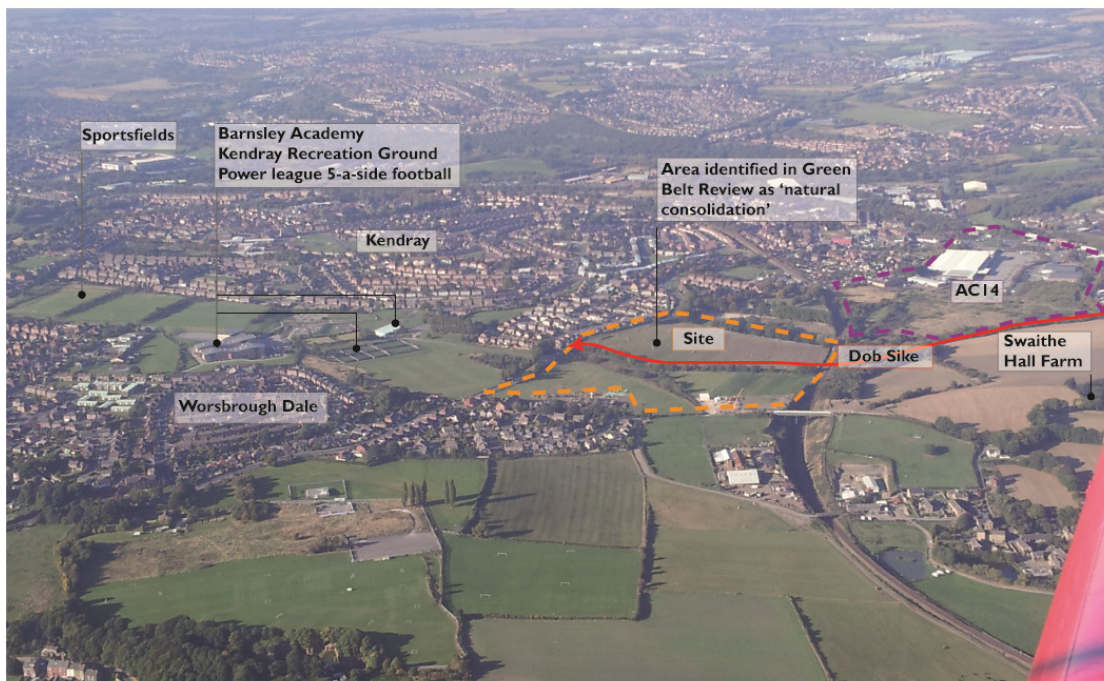
Yorkshire Land Ltd.,
PO Box 785,
Harrogate,
HG19RT

2nd May 2016.

Dear Mr Green,

Land at Hunningley Lane, Barnsley.

Further to my letter of the 9th of January 2015 and the landscape appraisal Smeeden Foreman undertook for this site in May 2014 I have re-examined the context of your site at Hunningley Lane in light of the proposed allocation of a parcel of land identified as AC14, and to examine the potential impacts upon the area west of Hunningley Lane which forms a green area between Kendray and Worsbrough Dale (UB13). I have also considered the setting within the Green Belt of Swaithe Hall and Swaithe House, listed Grade II and Grade II* respectively. These areas are shown in the annotated aerial photograph seen below. My earlier opinion contained in the documents to which I have referred remains unchanged in that the development of your site would not harm the effectiveness of the Green Belt between Urban Barnsley and Wombwell.



The proposed allocation AC14 is shown within the proposed site options and changes for Urban Barnsley as “land at Bleachcroft Way, Stairfoot” where there is 15.8 Ha identified for mixed use development. The site plan includes the comment that the“uses could include housing and a Primary school site option.” The Barnsley Unitary Development Plan previously identified this land for employment use. The site abuts the Green Belt area UB12 in the Green Belt Review, from which it is delineated by woodland vegetation along Dob Sike, as shown on the photograph below.



General Area UB12 shown in the Barnsley Green Belt Review (Green Belt: Urban Barnsley and Royston) prepared for the Council by Arup and which abuts areas of Green Belt to the south and east identified as WOM1 & 3 together provide a separation between Barnsley and Wombwell.

The Green Belt Review at 14.1.2 provides a narrative of the tabular presentation of the Green Belt Assessment for UB12 and amongst other points records “This general area serves to protect a strategic gap of 1.5 km between Urban Barnsley and Wombwell...”. Taking a representative point on the edge of Wombwell shown in my illustration Viewpoint 1 it can be seen that the AC14 site falls on the edge of this radius, with a small portion within the radius. This situation is directly comparable with the proposed Hunningley Lane site which falls completely outside the 1.5 m radius drawn from Wombwell. This clearly illustrates that the proposed development of the Hunningley Lane site does not compromise the strategic Green Belt gap.

Using a dimension for determining the extent of Green Belt necessary for it to be effective should be qualified to include other factors, especially the National Planning Policy Framework requirement expressed in paragraph 85 to “.....define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”.

The proposed AC14 allocation has a boundary to the Green Belt defined by the watercourse Dob Sike, with an associated belt of vegetation which could be strengthened through additional woodland planting to create a stronger physical feature.

I noted in my previous letter to you with respect to this site that the perception of openness in creating an alternative landscape to built-up areas on either side of the Green Belt is usually dependant on the capacity of the intervening landscape to provide a distinct landscape clearly identifiable as an area of landscape character which is distinct from the adjoining urban areas. This in turn acts to allow the perception of those adjoining areas as themselves having a distinct and separate landscape character. This perception is most often associated with inter visibility between settlements to either side of the Green Belt, and with the views from the routes connecting settlements across the Green Belt. My computer generated zone of theoretic visibility (ZTV) illustrated at Viewpoint 01 is representative of views across the Green Belt from Wombwell to Barnsley. Assuming that the Hunningley Lane site were developed with two storey houses this site would not be visible from Wombwell, unlike parts of the proposed AC14 site. As I previously noted the Hunningley Lane site boundary with the Green Belt would be defined by a deep cutting to an active railway, a feature the Green Belt review in other areas considered to be a desirable Green Belt boundary.

The area about the representative viewpoint 01 is an elevated position on the edge of Wombwell. A photograph from this area is shown below and illustrates the rising ground beyond which the Hunningley lane site is located. The photograph illustrates the extent of rolling and well treed countryside which would be retained within UB12 and form an attractive Green Belt between Barnsley and Wombwell.



The second area upon which I would wish to elaborate from my previous assessment and letter to you, is the relationship between the potential development of the Hunningley Lane site and the green area between Kendray and Worsbrough Dale (identified in the Green Belt Review as UB13). As the annotated aerial photograph illustrates this area provides a 'Green Wedge' within Urban Barnsley. The area is extensively developed with the buildings of Barnsley Academy and the Power League Five A-Side football hall, as well as with sports field to both east and west of the buildings and with associated roads, car parks and fences. These features surrounded by the adjacent housing diminish any perception of 'openness', and the area does not contribute to the strategic Green Belt between Barnsley and Wombwell. It is evident that the area is a valuable

part of the green infrastructure for the surrounding areas and provides routes for cycle and pedestrian movement away from the road network. These functions could not be effected by the development of the Hunningley Lane site across which there are no public rights of access, nor evidence of informal use. Illustrative layouts for development at Hunningley Lane (shown in our Landscape Appraisal of May 2014) demonstrate the capacity of this site to accommodate significant numbers of dwellings whilst leaving a generous open corridor east – west through the site along Dob Sike and also a substantial area along the railway line. Such areas would be capable of landscape and ecological improvement to the benefit of the surrounding area and for new residents. More importantly public access across the site would be available and would connect to those routes within the Green Wedge to the west and provide off-road connectivity to the rail over-bridge at White Cross Lane and improve safe access into the countryside to the east. This approach would enhance the value of the existing Green Infrastructure in the gap between Kendray and Worsbrough Dale (UB13).

The potential to incorporate Green Infrastructure within the Hunningley Lane site through landscape and ecological enhancement and providing separate pedestrian and cycle routes connected to those to the west of Hunningley Lane would be consistent with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) objectives for sustainable development.

With respect to the listed buildings in the nearby settlement of Swaithe, the Green Belt Review when considering the function of the Green belt to “preserve the setting and special character of historic towns”, notes that Barnsley does not contain any historic towns. Two listed buildings within the vicinity of Hunningley Lane are noted, these being: Grade II Listed Swaithe Hall, Cruck Barn and Stable Block, and also Grade II* Listed Swaithe House, within Swaithe. The Green Belt Review concluded (at 14.1.2) that, “The General Area also has a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of the historic assets at Swaithe.” The location of Swaithe and Swaithe Hall (Farm) are shown on the plan for Viewpoint 01. The Review also notes Ardsley Church which is set within a developed area some 1.5 km from your site and as a result has therefore not been considered further. In many views the large scale commercial buildings at Stairfoot, seen in the view below, are a principle detracting element to the setting of the listed buildings, which exceed any impacts from housing in the vicinity.



The landscape setting of listed buildings may result from a historic association of land and buildings arising through past design or an appreciation of past and current land uses. An appreciation of landscape setting may arise from views to, or from the listed buildings or the experience of travelling through the landscape to the buildings.

Swaithe Hall Farm is on a high point above the valley of the River Dove which flows between Swaithe and Wombwell. This rising ground restricts views from Wombwell towards the Hunningley Lane site, but provides a vantage point for Swaithe Hall Farm. This substantial complex of buildings has a belt of large trees to the north and west of a large garden which restrict views towards Barnsley. Views to the north-east include the commercial and residential developments along Wombwell lane which detract from the appreciation of landscape setting for this complex of buildings. Where filtered views exist towards the Hunningley Lane site they are above the vegetation fringing the railway line, however these views include the existing dwellings and developments along Hunningley Lane and whilst new dwellings would be closer they would not comprise a new element in the view and a significant belt of agricultural land and trees would continue to provide separation from Urban Barnsley. The trees providing a screen within the garden of these buildings prevent views southward towards the area from Hunningley Lane. On this basis I would not anticipate any significant adverse effect on the setting of the listed buildings.



Swaithe House is located within Swaithe and will continue to enjoy the setting provided by the village set within the surrounding Green Belt.

The access to the listed building, and to Swaithe is across the railway bridge on White Cross Lane. Our previous landscape appraisal noted that this lane is fringed by a housing development on the southern side of the lane and also on the northern side where a small group of houses abuts the road junction with Hunningley Lane. We also noted an extensive area of farm waste and scrap machinery on the northern side of the lane. Development of the Hunningley Lane site north of White Cross Lane would result in the removal of this area of agricultural dereliction and

an appropriate landscape margin to the lane could enhance, rather than detract from the approach to Swaithe and thus the landscape setting of the listed buildings.

The Barnsley Green Belt review scored each of the Green Belt areas and recorded a score for UB12 as 19 out of 25 which allowed them to conclude that the General Area strongly fulfils the role of Green Belt. This score is made up with an equal weighting (ie 5 points) given to each of the five purposes of the Green Belt. The wisdom of this is questionable in that potentially 5 points are awarded with respect to the setting and special character of historic towns, when the assessment identifies that Barnsley has no historic towns. These points are awarded based upon other designations of historic value which whilst having weight in determining planning applications and policy may not necessarily have significance in determining the extent of Green Belt.

I have re-read the Green Belt Assessment for UB12 and considered the potential impact upon the scores for each of the five purposes of the Green Belt were the Hunningley Lane site to be removed from this area and allocated for residential development.

The first purpose considered is to check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. The first part of this section of the assessment considers boundary definition and records that on the whole the existing Green Belt boundary is "relatively weak".

The Green Belt Review also records; "An operational railway line which traverses the General Area from north to south could constitute a strong durable boundary should the area be considered for sub-division". The railway adjacent to the Hunningley lane site is contained within a deep cutting and is within a well wooded corridor, with fairly extensive woodland on the eastern side of the railway. Were the Green Belt boundary to be re-drawn to exclude the Hunningley Lane site the boundary would be formed by the railway line and the Green Belt would gain a well-defined and durable boundary to a large part of the north western edge of the retained Green Belt.

The second element considered in assessing the first purpose of the Green belt is called 'level of Containment' and includes a consideration of the protection of open land contiguous to Urban Barnsley; protecting the strategic gap between Barnsley and Wombwell and the relationship of existing development to the Green Belt and consequently the appropriateness of allowing development where it results in the consolidation of boundaries and a rounding-off of development.

Some open land is invariably lost if developed, however as I have discussed earlier in this letter, the green area between Kendray and Worsbrough Dale (UB13) comprises valued elements of Green Infrastructure for the local area which can be augmented by creating new public access across the Hunningley Lane site into the open countryside to the east.

Of significant importance is that the identified strategic gap of 1.5 km between Barnsley and Wombwell would not be impinged upon were the Hunningley Lane site to be removed from the Green Belt.

The Arup assessment in the section addressing 'Level of Containment' also considers the level of containment within the existing development patterns and states that where areas are highly contained within the urban form (50% and above) development in such areas would represent a natural rounding of the built form. In their assessment of this aspect of the Green Belt their qualitative summary notes: "A small-scale of natural consolidation exists to the south of the Lockeafish Cemetery, on the land bounded by the operational railway and to the south by Dob Sike." This supports the allocation of at least northern part of your site. Where I believe this is insufficient is in not including the land to the south of Dob Sike which is itself contained to the south by the White Cross Lane residential development. As stated above Arup have identified

and confirmed that the Green Belt boundary in this location is “relatively weak” and records in more detail with respect to the area about Hunningley Lane “To the west the Green Belt boundary is weakly defined by built form around White Cross Lane which has sprawled beyond the B6100 Ardsley Road” (Ardsley Road being known as Hunningley Lane north of White Cross Lane). Taken together this would form a well-defined edge to the area and allow the urban pattern to be consolidated in a natural rounding of the built form. As you will see from our illustrations this pattern would be wholly consistent with the allocation of AC14.

A reassessment of UB12, with your site removed from the Green Belt, should on the basis of the considerations given above improve the overall score for the first purpose of the Green belt from 4/5 to 5/5.

The second purpose of Green Belt in assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment is considered within the review in two areas which in broad terms are described, as; firstly through enhancing beneficial use, access and enjoyment of the countryside and to address damaged or derelict land and secondly in terms of the openness of areas of Green Belt and their capacity to offer a countryside distinct from the urban areas.

A redefined UB12 would be better connected to the Green Wedge between Kendray and Worsbrough Dale (UB13) through the provision of access across the Hunningley Lane site from urban areas into open countryside and closer to the network of footpaths and bridleways. Landscape and ecological enhancement as part of Green Infrastructure within the site would add recreational and landscape value to routes to either side.

The Green Belt Assessment notes that despite development at Swaithe and Swaithe's Hall the area had a rural character, partly because views across the area to Wombwell were restricted by woodland and rolling topography. These qualities will be retained and the representative Viewpoint 01 demonstrates the discrete nature of the Hunningley Lane site looking from the Wombwell side of the Green belt. Were the Hunningley Lane site to be removed from the Green belt the quality of the remaining area would remain rural.

The score for this aspect of the assessment was 4/5 and would be supported rather than diminished were UB12 redefined.

The third purpose of Green Belt, to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another is maintained through the retention of a strategic gap of 1.5 km between Urban Barnsley and Wombwell.

The score for this aspect of the assessment would remain 5/5.

The fourth purpose of Green Belt to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, I have previously discussed. However the assessment of UB14 notes the presence of both Grade II* and Grade II buildings, just as there are within UB12. The score given for UB13 is 4/5 and to maintain consistency the score for this element of the assessment of UB12 might be increased to 4/5. In concluding that there would be no significant impact upon the setting of the two listed buildings in the local area the existing score of 3/5 would be changed to 4/5

The final purpose of the Green Belt to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land was assessed “The designation of land in UB12 means that it is assisting urban regeneration, however the level of built form within UB12 means it does not completely fulfil this purpose as it is surrounded by development on all sides. Were the Hunningley Lane site to be developed as part of the rounding-off of development discussed above this situation would remain the same and the existing score of 3/5 would be maintained.

Were the Green Belt parcel UB12 redefined, the overall score based upon the assessment criteria and methodology employed in preparing the assessment, would result in an increased overall score for this area from 19/25 up to 21/25.

In conclusion, I would note the following.

Having considered our previous comments and landscape assessment I am confirmed in the view that a development at Hunningley Lane could not harm the existing effectiveness of the Green Belt. By utilising the railway as a new edge to the Green Belt in this area it would be possible to satisfy the National Planning Policy Framework requirement expressed in paragraph 85 to “.....define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”.

The area west of Hunningley Lane which forms a green area between Kendray and Worsbrough Dale area does not contribute to the strategic 1.5 km Green Belt between Barnsley and Wombwell and any potential perception of ‘openness’ is diminished by extensive educational and sports facilities. The area has valuable Green Infrastructure benefits which can be linked through new cycle footway connections through the Hunningley Lane site out into the wider countryside to the benefit of existing local residents as well as occupiers of new dwellings.

The Hunningley Lane Site is outside the identified 1.5 km strategic gap created by the Green Belt between Wombwell and Barnsley, in common with the similarly situated proposed allocation AC14, and in my assessment the visual impact of any development upon the Green Belt would be too slight to compromise the landscape character of the Green Belt and diminish the effectiveness of the Green Belt in providing a distinct landscape between the two built-up areas.

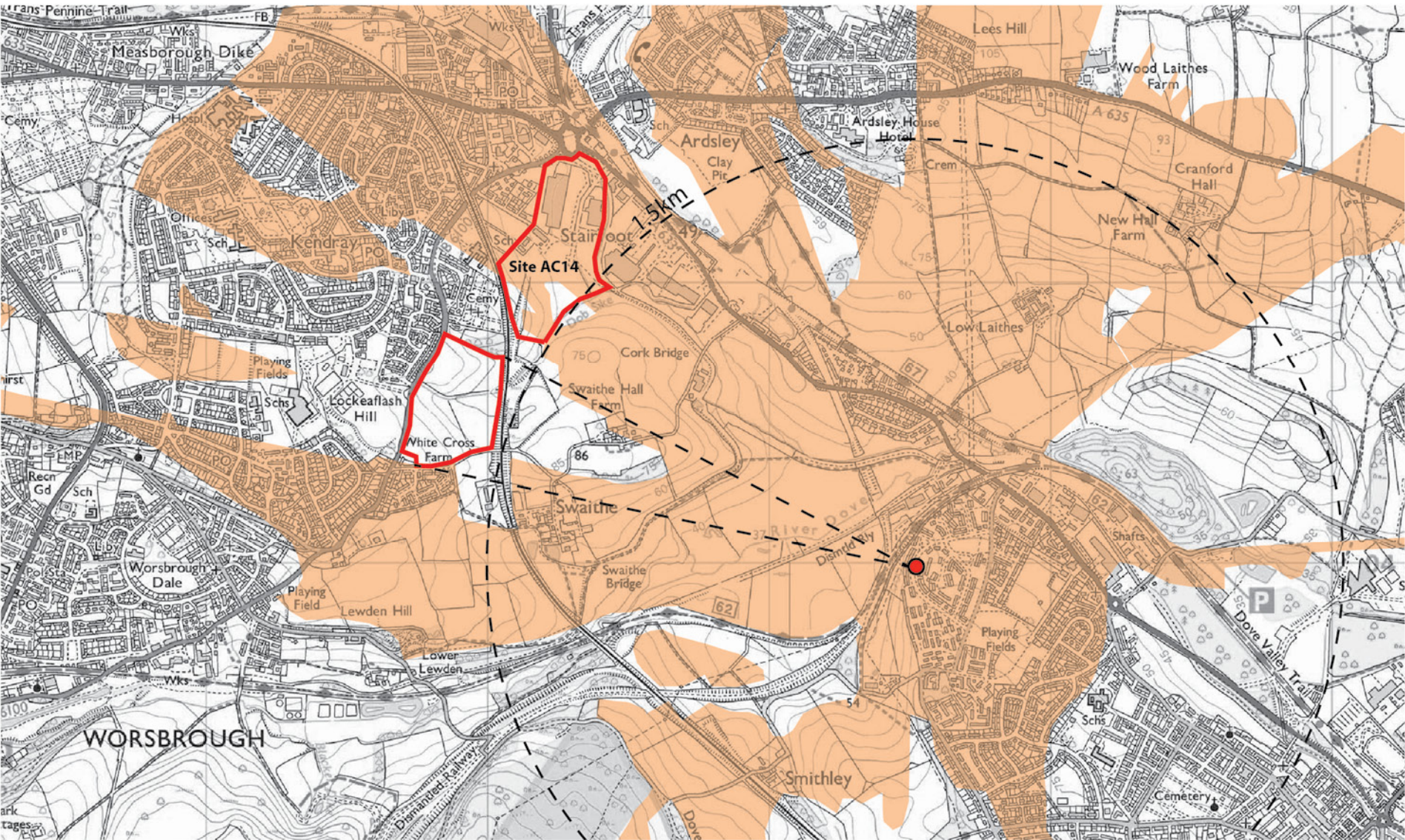
Yours sincerely,

Mark Smeeden
BA DipLA DipHort MIHort CMLI
Chartered landscape Architect.

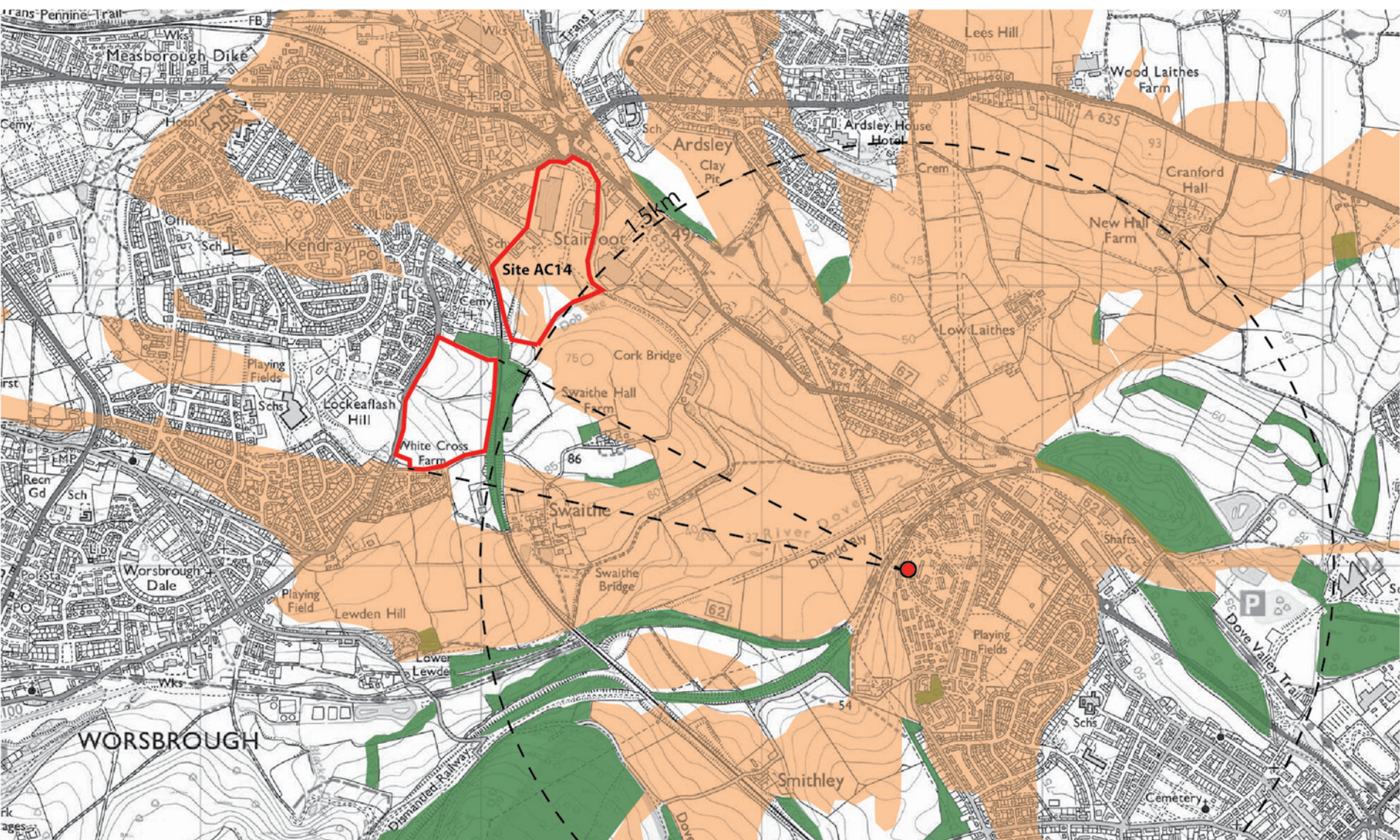
Enc. Viewpoint 01.



Anticipated visibility of 2 storey development without visual barriers



Anticipated visibility of 2 storey development with visual barriers



Key

- Areas of theoretical visibility
- Key screen vegetation shown at 15m
- The site

Receptor height: 1.8m

Target development height:
2 Storeys: 9m

